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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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They say it’s not the heat, but the humidity. Well, I say that it’s either one or the other, or worse, both! The country is currently in a weather meltdown; it’s in the mid-90’s here in the Northeast, with the heat index (heat and humidity) teetering around 100 degrees and higher. It’s brutal out there. It’s been that way all week, progressing to worse day-by-day.

Heat index means how hot it feels to a human when combining the current temperature and humidity. I guess the concept makes sense, and it’s something that no one likes to feel. But I do know that people everywhere are doing whatever they can to stay cool. It’s not easy! I’m sitting in my study with the AC blasting away, and there’s not too much relief! Sure, it’s better than no AC, but I’d like to see some relief from this weather rather than trying to find a way to get around it!

So, while I continue to try to find some relief, as most of you are likely trying to do, let’s move right along and get to this week’s issue!

Until next time...

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - PS 4 ’Eco-Concept’ Is Gorgeous!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Asura’s Wrath to New Heights!
Gears of War 3!

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Playstation 4 ’Eco-Concept’ Is Gorgeous

With Nintendo recently announcing the successor to its popular Wii video game system, all eyes have shifted to Microsoft and Sony for hints of what the future holds for the the Xbox 360 and Playstation.

Neither has said anything officially, though leaks here and there are starting to garner press. A DigiTimes report said Sony is prepping a new console for release in 2012; while a director of operations for chipmaker AMD claimed that the next Xbox will produce graphics rivaling the scenes in James Cameron’s "Avatar."

It’s all hype and a lot of fun, which makes this gorgeously rendered concept of an imagined Playstation 4 all the more interesting. It comes to us from designer Joseph Dumary on the site Yanko Design - and is something I’m hoping Sony draws inspiration from.

The highlights that I’m most appreciative of are the system’s embrace of sustainable manufacturing and energy efficiency. According to Dumary, his concept would contain 60 percent recycled materials with a smart zero watt standby mode. Since it was released in 2006, Sony has been revising the Playstation 3 hardware to be more energy efficient, going from a 380W power supply in the first generation to a 200W unit in the current "slim" model.

It makes sense that Sony might take energy conservation even further with its next system. In 2008, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and consulting firm Ecos recommended in a study that the next generation of systems "have power-management features built in, a "sleep" button on the console, and automatic power-down after three hours of inactivity." According to the study, adding these features would save the U.S. more than $1 billion in electricity costs.

Dumary’s design would seem to align with some of those recommendations. He’s included an "ECO Restart" function that allows a game to be saved, "the console turned off, and turned back on to resume exactly where the user left off without the need for a full start up, reducing energy waste and prolonging the life of the unit."

Of course, this thing is also loaded with the latest tech to make virtual worlds come to life. Some of the dream specs listed include a 1.5TB HDD, Full 3D 4K2K compatible, DLNA, DPhdmi (HDMI Connect), 3D Blu-ray, USB 3.0, and more.

Whatever Sony and Microsoft release next, you can bet that the systems themselves will be much more energy efficient than their predecessors. If they can embrace some greener materials (and reduce the toxicity of their components as well), the real world will be better off as you save that virtual one from an imminent alien invasion.

Asura’s Wrath Takes Game Cinematics to New Heights

Console video games are becoming more like big blockbuster movies all the time. Seeing this trend, Capcom has decided to jump ahead a few years and give us Asura s Wrath, an epic hybrid of sorts that blends cinema and gameplay in ways few developers have yet dared to try. I didn t manage to play the game at E3 this year, but I did catch up with Capcom at a New York event not long ago where I played through the PS3 game demo twice. I left

fairly impressed, a little confused, but definitely curious.

Here s the story as I understand it (and I don t really understand it). You play as Asura, a deity or half-god of sorts. Asura has been betrayed by his fellow gods and stripped of all his powers, kind of like Thor. Now he s really angry, out to seek vengeance and save his daughter Mithra from the Seven Deities (not dwarves) that have her. The angrier Asura gets, the crazier he looks. His hair goes white; his skin turns to stone; and when things really heat up, he even sprouts two extra sets of arms.

The portion of Asura s Wrath I played through was made up of probably 90-percent cinematic sequences. Save for one boss battle that was played more like a traditional third-person action game (it was an odd diversion), the majority of Asura s Wrath seems to consist of strangely interactive cinematic scenes with no graphical UI at all. In the demo, when you need to perform something, a button will often pop up on screen to show you what to do, but other than that you re on your own as you face a fat boss who keeps getting larger every time you defeat him.

Capcom and developer CyberConnect2 explain that the game isn t just one quicktime element after another, though it s hard to grasp the level of control you have until you actually play it. Like an action game, there are basic controls that follow you throughout the experience. One button jumps, another shoots missiles, while another lets you catch things and deflect them. Different abilities come into play during difference sequences. Many sequences are on rails, sometimes from behind, sometimes from the side or any other odd angle Capcom can think up. Partway through the demo, you chase down a 100 foot version of one of the mean deities (he is Shadow of the Colossus big) and deflect his missiles back at him, while shooting your own and dodging attacks. During other segments you scale his body and after you defeat him, you actually grow more arms and hurl his carcass into space.

Don t think it s over though. After an extended non-interactive cutscene, an even bigger god (see the top of this post) shows his face and pokes his finger at the Earth, hoping to crush Asura like a bug. To stop him, you perform a sequence of button strikes. It s completely bizzare and in no way plausible, but oddly entertaining.

It s difficult to separate gameplay from cinema in Asura s Wrath. All the while you play, the camera angle keeps shifting and the scenario constantly changes, much like a fast-paced blockbuster movie. Non-interactive cutscenes seamlessly weave themselves into play as well, some more welcome than others, but none intruding as much as a long-winded scenes from Metal Gear Solid 4. The demo we played just kept getting faster, more frantic, and more outlandish with each passing minute. Its tough to imagine Capcom creating an entire game filled with this much action and craziness, but that may be just what it s attempting.

Asura s Wrath is an interesting experiment for the industry. Will players embrace a game that could legitimately be considered more video than game? It s hard to say. If anything, the scifi/manga/mythical world could prove too odd for American audiences, who aren t used to controlling a hero with six arms. The closest many of us have come to six arms is defeating Goro in Mortal Kombat. But hey, in a market where Katamari Damacy can take off, anything is possible. We look forward to spending a lot more time with Asura s Wrath when it nears closer to its 2012 release for the Xbox 360 and PS3.

Gears of War 3 Goes Behind The Scenes To Discuss The End

When Gears of War 3 hits this September, it will mark the end of an era. The franchise has become one of the most important and recognizable games of this generation of consoles, and after several years as one of the Xbox 360 s flagship exclusive titles, the trilogy comes to a conclusion. There may or may not still be further GoW games in the future, but the primary story of Marcus Fenix and his now shattered society will reach its finale.

In the video below, the developers at Epic Games talk a bit about the world that players will enter when they play GoW3. It is a society that has already collapsed, and the survivors are simply those that are too stubborn to die. There is no military, and the governments of the world have fallen. All that is left is a handful of former COGs that embark on one last, desperate mission.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

FBI Raids Suspected Anonymous Hackers in New York

Internet "hacktivist" group Anonymous was the target of several early morning raids conducted at homes in Long Island, Brooklyn, and Baldwin, New York today. FBI agents used search warrants to obtain computers and other electronics from the residences and arrested several individuals with ages ranging from teens to early 20s.

Among its various exploits, Anonymous has performed web-based attacks on major credit card companies including Mastercard and Visa. Its hacker cohorts, LulzSec, have taken aim at the CIA, as well as the Arizona Police Department in an effort to expose alleged racism. Yesterday, LulzSec took credit for an attack on Rupert Murdoch’s U.K. tabloid The Sun. A website redirect sent readers to a fake Sun page announcing the embattled media mogul’s death from a drug overdose.

It isn’t clear whether those arrested in today’s raids were confirmed to be connected to the hacking troupe, though the organization’s notorious secrecy makes obtaining any information on members a difficult task to begin with. One of Anonymous’ main Twitter accounts - which had celebrated the Murdoch debacle just last night - has not seen an update in roughly 9 hours, though that is far from a concrete confirmation of success by law enforcement.

How Two LulzSec Hackers Slipped Up

It was pretty astounding to hear that the feds had arrested 16 people

yesterday in connection with Anonymous and LulzSec hacking attacks. Of them, 14 were indicted for participating in distributed denial of service attacks as part of Anonymous's Operation Payback, which took down the Mastercard and Paypal sites because they stopped processing donations to Wikileaks. But two of the hackers arrested yesterday had very different charges, well beyond linking their computers to a botnet in a mass DDoS attack. Both allegedly infiltrated secure organizations and leaked data in ways that now seem like they almost wanted to get caught.

One man, 21-year-old AT&T customer support contractor named Lance Moore, allegedly used his company-issued VPN login and password to go into the AT&T system and gather data that he then leaked as part of LulzSec's June 25 "50 Days of Lulz" release. The other, 21-year-old University of Central Florida computer student Scott Matthew Arciszewski, allegedly hacked into the FBI contractor Infragard in Tampa and uploaded files from there, which he then tweeted directly to the FBI's own Twitter account. Court documents outline how both suspects used arguably poor judgment when allegedly breaching their respective targets.

Moore started working for a company called Convergys in its Las Cruces, New Mexico office on Aug. 23, 2010, according to the complaint prepared by FBI Special Agent Jeffrey D. Calandra. In order to do his job as a customer service representative for AT&T Mobile, he was issued a login for the company's virtual private network. According to the complaint, the AT&T security team discovered a large cache of company data - including "thousands of spreadsheets, Microsoft Word documents, Microsoft PowerPoint presentations, image files, PDF files, applications and other files, largely concerning AT&T's plans related to its 4G data network and LTE (Long Term Evolution) mobile broadband network, among other topics - posted publicly on the file sharing site Fileape.com on April 16, 2011. The company valued the information at more than $5,000. The complaint goes on to describe how AT&T's own investigators caught, and fired, Moore.

AT&T investigators also found Moore had done a bunch of searches for file sharing and Fileape from his work computer. He was fired on May 19 but the damage was done. When LulzSec published its 50 Days of Lulz release on June 25, which contained the information Moore had allegedly leaked, the FBI started its investigation with the help of the company, which was likely happy to help nail Moore. Moore now faced data theft charges.

Arciszewski allegedly used his UFC dorm room's Internet connection to hack into FBI contractor Infragard on June 21, then broadcast the files he uploaded and instructions on how to breach the security. The breach was done in the name of LulzSec's Anti-Security movement, but not as part of an "official" LulzSec release. He allegedly posted the files on the website kobrascorner.com, which was registered under the name Voodookobra. FBI Special Agent Adam R. Malone wrote in his criminal complaint that he searched for Voodookobra on Google and found a Wikipedia entry from 2009 that named Arciszewski as its owner. UFC also helped Malone with his investigation by confirming the IP address that breached Infragard was the same one assigned to Arciszewski's dorm room. Malone found a post Arciszerski had allegedly made to hackforums.net under an account on which he used his own photo as an avatar, and he also found Arciszerski's Facebook page. But the kicker is that after Arciszerski breached and uploaded the files, he tweeted the news to both LulzSec and the FBI itself, the affidavit says:

The account @voodooKobra is still active. This is the most recent tweet, from yesterday:

I have had a very bad day. I am stressed to the max.less than a minute ago via web Favorite Retweet ReplyvoodooKobra
voodooKobra

In his chatroom comments to The Atlantic Wire yesterday, LulzSec frontman Topiary suggested those who were arrested were "volunteer/supporter DDoS Anons who accidentally (or just foolishly) used LOIC from their home IPs." He said newer or less serious members of the group were frequently lax about security out of recklessness, laziness, or "nessnessness." These accounts seem like examples of all three.

Taliban Network Hacked, Group Blames U.S. for "Technical Larceny"

The Taliban saw its information network disrupted today as email accounts, websites, and mobile phones connected to the organization began spreading false reports that its leader, Mullah Omar, had been killed. The militant Islamist group, which remains in the spotlight for harboring suspected al-Qaeda terrorists after 9/11, was quick to blame the United States military for the cyber attack, calling it "technical larceny."

Despite being notoriously secretive, the Afghanistan-based militant troupe has made its presence known in cyberspace, even going so far as to set up its own Twitter account. The terrorist group is particularly sensitive to modern technology and its ability to give away location data. Taliban documents have been discovered in the past that warn members of the dangers of carrying things like mobile phones.

Today’s virtual attack on the Taliban’s web and phone communication has led the group to threaten its regional phone service providers for cooperating with Western forces. One NATO spokesperson claimed to have no knowledge of the incident, while another refused to comment on the terrorists’ allegations. Whatever the case, it’s clear that the face of the war on terror is changing, and the internet is quickly becoming another front line.

Threatened by iPad, PCs Start To Look Like Tablets

The response by computer makers to the iPad stealing sales from them: Make their PCs more like iPads.

The "if you can’t beat ’em, join ’em" strategy" is prompting a wave of experimentation with the design of the laptop, which has been largely unchanged for two decades. Touch-sensitive screens and the use of Google’s Android system for mobile devices are two ways the PC industry is adapting.

About 50 million tablets are expected to be sold this year, and that could double to as many as 100 million next year. PC shipments worldwide grew just over 2 percent in the second quarter, short of what research firms IDC and Gartner had expected. The popularity of tablet computers was one of the main reasons.

One way PC makers are countering the threat is with iPad-style tablets running Android, but these haven’t seen wide success so far. And in trying

to emulate the iPad, they’re competing with not just Apple, but also with phone makers such as Motorola Inc., which are launching their own tablets.

So PC makers are offering hybrids that try to offer the best of both worlds. Some are tablet-like devices that come with keyboards, which the iPad doesn’t have. Others are PC-like, combining the tablet’s signature touch-screen with the ability to run heavy-duty Windows programs for photo editing and design.

Witness the Acer Iconia, a Windows laptop that looks like any other when the lid is down. When you open it, you’ll find two touch-sensitive screens and no keyboard, similar to a tablet computer. To type, you bring up a virtual keyboard on the lower screen. If you’re not using the keyboard, Web pages can flow from the top screen to the bottom one.

Another iPad-like laptop is the Dell Inspiron Duo. Its screen can be flipped around to face outward when the lid is closed. When folded that way, it works like a tablet.

Lenovo Group also sells a Windows laptop with a screen that can be detached from the keyboard to function as an Android tablet.

"We should learn some things from tablets," such as the iPad’s user-friendly interface and the ease of installing software from outside parties, said Yang Yuanquing, the CEO of Lenovo, the world’s fourth-largest maker of PCs.

Hewlett-Packard Co., the world’s largest maker of personal computers, is giving its PCs the ability to run applications written for its webOS software, which runs on smartphones and a tablet, the TouchPad.

In their experimentation, PC makers are reviving designs haven’t been very successful in their previous incarnations. The laptop with a screen that detaches to become a tablet is an idea that dates to 2002, when a flurry of tablet computers debuted along with Microsoft Corp.’s Windows Tablet Edition.

This earlier generation of tablet PCs didn’t catch on because they were expensive and too heavy for comfortable use in tablet mode. "Windows Tablet Edition" wasn’t much different from regular Windows, and it wasn’t fully adapted for tablet use. Microsoft added more touch-oriented features when it released Windows 7 in 2009.

Even with the improvements in Windows, however, the PC faces hurdles in mimicking the tablet’s design.

Windows isn’t a very friendly operating system for tablets, partly because it needs Intel-style processors to run on. These chips drain batteries much faster than the cellphone-style chips used in the iPad, with a core designed by ARM Holdings PLC. ARM chips can save power by turning off parts of themselves when they’re not in use, among other tricks.

"A lot of what makes the iPad an iPad is the long battery life," technology analyst Rob Enderle said.

Windows-based PCs and tablet computers that use Intel chips need bigger batteries, which make the devices heavier. Even then, the batteries don’t last as long as the iPad’s. The Dell Inspiron Duo weighs 3.4 pounds, or two and a half times the weight of the iPad. It has four hours of battery life, compared with 10 on the iPad.

Microsoft is hard at work developing a version of Windows that will run on ARM chips, and it’s expected to be ready next year. That means the next generation of laptops could match the iPad for weight and battery life.

But while waiting for the new software, PC makers are in an uncomfortable situation. The new software might be what they need, but in the meantime, they have to try other means to distract consumers from the iPad, such as borrowing tablet features. These experiments with laptop-tablet hybrids are unlikely to be as important as the advent of the new system, currently dubbed Windows 8. But something might stick, providing a model for the future of PCs.

"Right now the PC industry is fighting kind of a holding action," Enderle said.

Apple Unleashes Lion, Updates MacBook Air

Apple on Wednesday unleashed its new Lion operating system, running it on updated, more powerful versions of its MacBook Air ultra-thin laptop.

A slew of Apple product releases came as the California company’s stock rose on the back of record high net profit and revenue in the quarter ending June 25.

Lion is the latest version of the Macintosh computer operating system and boasts more than 250 added features including handling multi-touch controls.

Sales of Macintosh computers dramatically outpaced the overall market in the recently-ended quarter and Lion is expected to further ramp up interest in Apple products.

Lion will be pre-installed on new Macintosh computers and is available for download as an update from the Mac App Store for $30.

"Lion is the best version of OS X yet, and we’re thrilled that users around the world can download it starting today," said Apple senior vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing Philip Schiller.

Updated MacBook Air laptops feature speedier Intel processors, backlit keyboards, and quicker data ports.

MacBook Air models range in price from $999 to $1,599 depending on processor speeds, memory and other features.

Apple also introduced a Thunderbolt Display that serves as a docking station and a high-quality desktop screen for a Mac notebook computer. Thunderbolt Display will be priced at $999 when it hits the market some time in the coming two months, according to Apple.

Customers Angry, Staff Defiant at China’s Fake Apple Store

Customers at an apparent Apple Store in the Chinese city of Kunming

berated staff and demanded refunds on Friday after the shop was revealed to be an elaborate fake, sparking a media and Internet frenzy.

Long a target of counterfeiters and unauthorized resellers, Apple Inc was alerted to the near flawless fake shop by an American blogger living in the southwestern city, more than 1,000 miles from the nearest genuine Apple stores in Beijing and Shanghai.

"When I heard the news I rushed here immediately to get the receipt, I am so upset," a customer surnamed Wang told Reuters, near tears. "With a store this big, it looks so believable who would have thought it was fake?"

Wang, a petite, 23-year-old office worker who would not give her first name, spent 14,000 yuan ($2,170) last month buying a Macbook Pro 13-inch and a 3G iPhone from the Kunming store. She wasn't issued a receipt at the time, with staff telling her to come back later.

"Where's my receipt, you promised me my receipt last month!" Wang shouted at employees, before being whisked away to an upstairs room.

Staff were also angry at the unwanted attention after more than 1,000 media outlets picked up the story and pictures of the store from the BirdAbroad blog.

"The media is painting us to be a fake store but we don't sell fakes, all our products are real, you can check it yourself," said one employee, who didn't want to give his name.

"There is no Chinese law that says I can't decorate my shop the way I want to decorate it."

While upset at the coverage and unwilling to be fully identified, staff were cooperative when Reuters visited the store, answering questions and allowing the shop to be filmed.

Another employee, surnamed Yang, said business had been affected, with customers demanding they prove the authenticity of their products.

Apple has declined to comment on the fake store or others like it dotted around China. The Cupertino, California-based firm has just four genuine Apple Stores in Beijing and Shanghai and none in Kunming.

With about 3.2 million inhabitants, Kunming, the capital of the mountainous southwestern province of Yunnan, is small by Chinese standards and not well known in the West.

Located not far the borders of Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar, the city's fast-growing industrial and manufacturing base is emblematic of China's ascent on the world stage.

The fake Apple Store is situated along a crowded pedestrian-only shopping street, its black Apple logo gleaming. Inside, with its Apple posters on the walls and iPads and Macbook computers displayed on wooden tables, the store looks every bit like Apple Stores found all over the world but for some slightly shoddy workmanship and one or two errant details.

Not all customers were bothered by the revelations that the store was not the genuine article.

"As long as their products are real it's okay - after all, you enter a store

not to look at anything except their products," said Hu Junkai, 18. "If the products you buy are real why do you care whether the store is a copy?"

Wang was not convinced.

"The biggest thing I'm upset about is that I spent so much money at this store and I don't even know whether it is real or not," she said.

"What can I do? They aren't going to give me a refund."

California Man Gets 4 Years for Stalking on Facebook

A California man who trolled women's Facebook pages searching for clues that allowed him to take over their email accounts was sentenced Friday to more than four years in state prison after a judge rejected a plea for a lighter sentence and likened the man to a peeping Tom.

Once he took over women's email accounts, George Bronk searched their folders for nude or semi-nude photographs or videos sent to their husbands or boyfriends and distributed the images to their contact list, prosecutors said.

The emails went to families, friends and coworkers. Women in 17 states, the District of Columbia and England were victimized.

"This case serves as a stark example of what occurs in so-called cyberspace. It has very real consequences," Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Lawrence Brown said. "The intrusion of one's profile is no different than intruding one's home."

Bronk, 23, pleaded guilty in January to charges that included computer intrusion, false impersonation and possession of child pornography.

Brown sentenced him to four years in state prison for the charges related to the Facebook and email offenses, and added eight more months for charges related to child pornography.

Bronk's attorney, Monica Lynch, said her client took responsibility for his actions and showed remorse. She had sought a sentence of one year in local jail with probation afterward, or two years in state prison with no probation.

Brown based his decision on a sentencing recommendation by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Bronk was living in the Sacramento suburb of Citrus Heights with his parents in December 2009 when he began scanning Facebook with the intent of taking over email accounts. The practice continued until last September.

He looked for email accounts on Facebook pages then gleaned enough personal information from postings to answer basic Internet security questions, such as the name of an elementary school or favorite color.

After he changed passwords and took over accounts, Bronk would search folders for compromising photos and distribute them publicly, prosecutors said.

He even taunted some of the women in online exchanges and coerced at least one into sending him more explicit photographs by threatening to distribute the pictures he already had.

Danielle Piscak, 22, of Parkland, Wash., told The Associated Press earlier this year that she was able to contact the person who had hacked into her email account and ask why he was doing it. She said Bronk’s reply was, "Because it’s funny."

There was no current phone listing for Piscak, and a Facebook message seeking reaction to the sentence was not immediately returned.

The case illustrates the vulnerability of all Internet users, said prosecuting attorney Robert Morgester of the state attorney general’s office.

"The victims we went to said I had very robust passwords. But it didn’t matter how robust the password was if the recovery question is easy," he said. "Lost your password? What’s your favorite color or what high school did you go to? Or what’s your dog’s name? And he was able to glean that information from social media."

Investigators used information from Bronk’s confiscated computer to email questionnaires to 3,200 of his Internet contacts, asking if they had been victimized. Forty-six women said they had.

Investigators also said they found 172 email files with explicit photographs on Bronk’s computer.

Lynch has said her client was immature, unemployed and bored while he cared for his ailing parents.

His parents declined comment after the sentencing.

At a hearing earlier this year, his mother, Joyce Bronk, said her son told them he needed help for a drinking problem then began attending Alcoholics Anonymous and taking classes to be trained as an emergency medical technician.

"This was an Internet persona he created when he was a drunk," she said at the time as a way to explain his actions.

Authorities began the investigation after one victim called Connecticut State Police, which referred the complaint to the California Highway Patrol.

Victims turned up in Alabama, Arizona, California, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

Bronk was arrest in October.

He had hoped to become a paramedic but will not be able to because he will have to register as a sex offender as a result of his crimes, his attorney said.

Federal Government Indicts Former Demand Progress Executive Director For Downloading Too Many Journal Articles

Moments ago, Aaron Swartz, former executive director and founder of Demand Progress, was indicted by the US government. As best as we can tell, he is being charged with allegedly downloading too many scholarly journal articles from the Web. The government contends that downloading said articles is actually felony computer hacking and should be punished with time in prison.

"This makes no sense," said Demand Progress Executive Director David Segal; "it s like trying to put someone in jail for allegedly checking too many books out of the library."

"It s even more strange because JSTOR has settled any claims against Aaron, explained they ve suffered no loss or damage, and asked the government not to prosecute," Segal added.

James Jacobs, the Government Documents Librarian at Stanford University, also denounced the arrest: "Aaron s prosecution undermines academic inquiry and democratic principles," Jacobs said. "It s incredible that the government would try to lock someone up for allegedly looking up articles at a library."

Demand Progress is collecting statements of support for Aaron on its website: http://act.demandprogress.org/sign/support_aaron/

"Aaron s career has focused on serving the public interest by promoting ethics, open government, and democratic politics," Segal said. "We hope to soon see him cleared of these bizarre charges."

Demand Progress is a 500,000-member online activism group that advocates for civil liberties, civil rights, and other progressive causes.

Facebook Wins Dismissal of Second Winklevoss Case

Facebook Inc won a dismissal of a second lawsuit by the Olympic rowing twins Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss seeking to boost their $65 million settlement with the company and its founder, Mark Zuckerberg.

U.S. District Judge Douglas Woodlock in Boston dismissed litigation over the accord, three months after a federal appeals court in San Francisco turned aside a related lawsuit.

The 2008 settlement was intended to resolve claims that Zuckerberg stole the twins’ idea for what became the world’s most popular social networking website.

Zuckerberg created Facebook in 2004 in his Harvard University dormitory room. His feud with the Winklevosses, who competed in the 2008 Beijing Olympics and also attended Harvard, was dramatized in the 2010 film "The Social Network."

On June 22, the Winklevosses decided not to appeal the California decision to the Supreme Court.

Instead, they and business partner Divya Narendra pursued the Boston lawsuit, raising a different argument, namely that Facebook had

"intentionally or inadvertently suppressed evidence" during settlement talks, including communications at the time of its founding.

But in his Friday ruling, Woodlock accepted Facebook's argument that the Winklevosses' substantive claims had already been rejected by the courts.

Both lawsuits were brought by ConnectU Inc, a company that the Winklevosses and Narendra had set up.

"We expected that the court would enter a judgment," said Michael Schrag, a lawyer for the twins, in an interview. "The next step is a post-judgment motion under Rule 60(b)," a federal rule letting courts grant relief from final judgments.

Facebook spokesman Andrew Noyes declined to comment.

The Palo Alto, California-based company said it has more than 500 million members, and analysts have said it could be worth $70 billion or more if it goes public, perhaps in 2012.

In upholding the $65 million settlement, the San Francisco appeals court called the accord "quite favorable" for the twins. Chief Judge Alex Kozinski wrote that the time for the litigation to end "has now been reached."

The case is ConnectU Inc et al v. Facebook Inc et al, U.S. District Court, District of Massachusetts, No. 07-10593.

Hacker Group Launches Online Social Network

Infamous hacker group Anonymous launched Monday its own social network after being rejected by Google's freshly-launched online community.

"Today we welcome you to begin anew," the hacker alliance said at the website anonplus.com, which it described as a platform to distribute information.

"Welcome to the Revolution - a new social network where there is no fear... of censorship...of blackout...nor of holding back."

The drive to build a social network came after the Anonymous account was suspended at the Google+ online community, which was launched last month by the Internet giant as a challenge to Facebook.

A message on the anonplus.com website promised that the Anonymous social network would be for everyone and listed online monikers of developers taking part in the project.

Anonymous, which rose to infamy last year with cyber attacks in support of controversial whistle-blower website WikiLeaks, posted the suspension notice from Google on its blog at Tumblr.

The group has been linked to attacks on Visa, Mastercard and Paypal, which blocked donations to WikiLeaks after it published thousands of US diplomatic cables.

Early this year, Anonymous took credit for breaking into the website of HBGary Federal because the firm was working with federal agents to expose

the hackers’ identities.

Anonymous last week released a trove of military email addresses and passwords it claimed to have plundered from the network of US defense consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton.

In recent months, police in Spain, Turkey and Italy have arrested suspected members of Anonymous, which is believed to have branches in several countries.

Consumers Not Satisfied with Facebook

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) released on July 19 a report on consumer satisfaction with the internet, including social media. The report found that Facebook was the lowest ranked site of its kind.

The 2011 American Customer Satisfaction Index E-Business report, the 12th of its kind, was produced in collaboration with analytics firm ForeSee Results. The report uses data from over 70,000 customers and measures satisfaction on a scale on 1-100.

This year in the category Internet Social Media the report scored three websites - Wikipedia, Facebook, and YouTube (Google) - plus "All Others"; MySpace was not included in this year’s report.

Of the sites measured, Wikipedia scored highest with 78, YouTube (Google) came in second place with 74, followed by social media websites under the category of All Others with a score of 67; social networking giant Facebook, meanwhile, came last with a score of 66.

An outline of the report is available on the website of the ACSI.

Whether customer dissatisfaction with Facebook will lead customers to switch to Google’s new social network Google+ remains to be seen; however, it does appear that customers are moving away from Facebook. This trend away from Facebook was indicated in a separate report released June 12 by Facebook monitoring site Inside Facebook, which found the amount of active monthly users on the social networking site to be declining throughout the North America and parts of Northern Europe.

Google Warns of Malware Infection on Windows Users’ Computers

Google is harnessing the power of the web to alert Windows users of possible malware infections on their machine.

The malware alert was developed after the company noticed "some unusual search traffic" during routine maintenance on their data centers.

"After collaborating with security engineers at several companies that were sending this modified traffic, we determined that the computers exhibiting this behavior were infected with a particular strain of malicious software, or ’malware,’" said Google security engineer Damian Menscher in a July 19 post on the Google Security Blog. "As a result of this discovery, today some people will see a prominent notification at the top of their Google

web search results."

The yellow "Your computer appears to be infected" warning will appear at the top of Google's web search results if the company finds a computer is housing a specific type of malware, along with a link that shows how to fix the issue and remove the infections.

"We hope to use the knowledge we've gathered to assist as many people as possible," said Menscher, but comments left on Google's Security Blog suggested that the warning could be more detrimental to non-savvy computer users in the future than no official warning at all.

"It's too bad that the malware folks in the world already use 'your computer appears to be infected' messages to trick people into installing malicious software," commented a user by the name of Mecandes. "Tomorrow, the bad guys will copy the format and appearance of Google's version of the message, to leverage the trust people have in Google. Perhaps Google needs something akin to the Yahoo personalized 'sign-in seal' for moments like this?"

According to a January Security Threat Report by security company Sophos, the USA is home to the most infected webpages in the world. France, Russia, Germany and China follow in second to fifth places.

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